

9 June 1967

PERSONAL

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Dear Charlie:

I am sending this from Paris, where I've spent a week buying a new Triumph Spitfire (my old one is still prowling the roads of Vietnam) which I'm about to use on a trip down to Spain and the Riviera starting this morning. My earlier plan was to get back to RAND the first week in July, since Harry had emphasized that a summer institute of some sort was to start then and that there would be a lot of visitors. But Gus saw me the night before I left Saigon and informed that the summer institutes had fallen through so that so far as he knew there was no pressing reason why I had to get back early. Moreover, I was asked by Barry Zorthian to try to give some talks to Embassys on Vietnam on my way home -- although I may find that in the others, as in Paris, interest in Vietnam has fallen from low to zero thanks to the more edifying war in the Middle East (as it looks this morning) -- and I'm scheduled currently to talk in Sweden on 5th and 6th of July. I hope to spend a little time in Sweden and some in London after that, so I currently expect to be getting back more toward the end of July or even beginning of August. I will also be spending some time in Washington checking out of the State Department and following up in talks on the two papers that I sent ahead of me, so it will in any case probably be the end of July or early August before I get back to RAND; though I'll check with RAND as soon as I get back to the country, and if it seems desirable I might come out for at least a couple of weeks before going back to Washington and New York to spend a week or two there.

I appreciated very much your taking the time to send me a long tape and it was very welcome during my convalescence to get so much news from my friends at RAND. The reason you didn't get an immediate answer was that I was working very hard trying to get out two papers before I left Saigon in hopes of influencing

the New Team before I left. If you haven't seen these already, please ask Harry for them; the important one is on the political stakes for the U. S. and Vietnam in the coming election -- an attempt by me to turn the U. S. mission and the U. S. government around on the subject of support of Ky in the election, in favor of a southern civilian candidate. The other has some comments on the pacification program and a new orientation I would like to see it take. I had secretaries (plural) come to my bedroom every day including Sundays for several weeks getting these out, along with some other memos to Bob Komer, and I found that the emphasis I had placed on having adequate secretarial help in my letters to Harry was well placed. I think this was the first time that I can remember that I really had adequate secretarial help in taking dictation, getting out drafts and distributing copies, and it enabled me to get out about 200 pages of fairly finished work in the time that I was lying on my back.

Gus apparently had some rather distorted ideas of the advice I had been sending Harry. He had seen some of the memos that had been transcribed -- perhaps all of them, without knowing it -- but had the impression that I had in addition been sending a lot of word on reorganization. That doesn't happen to be the case; I don't happen to think organizationally (which may be a bad sign for someone interested theoretically in organizational decision making) and have no advice for anyone on how to construct or change organizations to make them function better (for instance, I had no advice to give on the construction of OCO, the Office of Civil Operations, which has just now been swallowed by MACV). So if you have seen my comments to Harry on substantive research, on the research environment at RAND, and on the general types of research that might be pursued, you've seen all that I have sent him. Moreover, as I discussed with Burt Klein a year ago, after several tours in the government as a special assistant, I have no desire to pursue that line of work any further, though of course I expect to help Harry as a friend -- like many others at RAND -- and would accept any organizational dot that would be a good one in which for me to pursue research. Gus pointed out that the most logical spot of that sort would be the Economics Department, which seems perfectly reasonable to me.

Incidentally, I don't think I congratulated you earlier on becoming head of the Economics Department, which I think is a most logical development and a very promising one. I'm happy to hear it. On the question on my coming, you might have a talk with Harry on the few personal points that I raised with him that might not have been included in any writing that you saw. The one matter on which I placed a great deal of emphasis was the above-mentioned item of having first claim on a good secretary, one capable of taking dictation or of transcribing accurately from records. I feel very strongly on this point, in that I feel that, having both at RAND and in Washington and Saigon having had last claim on secretaries for years, and having tasted at last in the last couple of months the real advantages in terms of written output of having one whose time I don't have to fight for. I propose to keep her pretty well occupied, so that there won't be room for very many others to get

much use out of her. Harry saw no problem on this point, although I understand from Gus that things in general may be tighter and more austere at this point than Harry anticipated. Nevertheless, I regard this an essential point so far as I am concerned, and I would propose to go anywhere within the organization (or if necessary, outside it) where it could be fulfilled. Money is the second matter; I have had a few words on this with Harry, whom you might talk to.

Although if I had left Vietnam six months to a year ago, I would have expected to leave the subject pretty well behind me, my attitude has changed more recently. I still don't see either Vietnam or counterinsurgency as a life work, or even as a major subject stretching beyond the next year or two, but I do expect and even welcome the chance to be involved in the subjects for that period of one to two years. The last couple of months have shown me how much it's possible to mine from my notebooks, and I have 20 or more notebooks filled with material that has never really been developed. A lot of this would be good background material for possible inclusion in a long study or a book and a great deal of it will be relevant to the inexperienced new team of Bunker, Locke, and Komer, who have just arrived in Saigon and who are anxious for guidance and new ideas. What I would like to do in the first few months at RAND is to transcribe all the material from my notebooks and thoughts on Vietnam, with these twin purposes of getting material down on paper for some long studies and of providing the New Team as many helpful suggestions as possible. Komer suggested that I sign on as a consultant to Ambassador Leonhardt's operation in the White House, Leonhardt having taken over from Komer, and, since the White House has no money for consultants, having them arrange that my consultant time be charged to some government research contract or other. This sounds like an ideal arrangement, since it would finance my time in turning out long lists of suggestions and thoughts to ship off immediately to their only useful audience: Komer, Locke, and Bunker in Vietnam and Leonhardt in Washington. Thus I could prepare for some long studies on counterinsurgency, political development, and our efforts specifically in Vietnam, and still feel socially useful in the short run: something that I would otherwise feel guilty about, having left Saigon rather precipitantly both for health and for personal reasons, before having earned the feeling that I had done everything I could to help the new regime.

Especially because of having left just at this point, Komer and Locke are especially anxious to have me out for at least a brief period in the fall, to do some inspection trips at that point and to carry on with some helpful advice. (Both Komer and Locke proved extremely gratifying listeners, reading everything that I gave them -- which amounted to a couple of hundred pages -- and taking fast action on a lot of it.) This, too, could be arranged on the basis of a White House consultantship. What looks to me like an ideal arrangement, then would involve several months of work at RAND with some brief visits to Washington interspersed, followed by one or two

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months in Vietnam, which would give me the chance not only to see how things had evolved there politically and militarily, and to help the team, but also to carry out and get responses to the written work I had done so far at RAND. It would also be an opportunity to do interviewing on some of the subjects I had developed in writing.

A different, but obviously closely related line of work would be to participate or to head a study of the sort I have proposed, of decision making in our past policy on Vietnam and an analysis of lessons to be learned from Vietnam to guide our involvement elsewhere. I would be especially interested in working on or heading such a study if it had the highest level access and interest of the sort that Dick Neustadt's Skybolt Study had. Of course, if I should be asked by McNamara or the White House to work on such a thing, it could absorb so much of my time in a shorter run as to rearrange the above schedule considerably. Again, it could be done in such a way as to have a great deal of relevance in a short run for our policy in Vietnam.

I will be fairly incommunicado for at least the next couple of weeks traveling through Spain and the Riviera. However, I expect to be back in Paris by the end of June, and if you have anything urgent to say you might send it off to American Express in Paris; I will check in there before leaving for Sweden or London. I will hope to live near the beach, perhaps in the Malibu area or closer in, when I get back to RAND -- although I may now arrive too late to take advantage of Paul Langer's offer to use his house during July -- so if you are aware of anything opening up along there you might keep me in mind. I won't comment on your remarks on tape now, since I don't have with me the notes that I wrote while listening to them, so that will have to wait till I get back. By the way, if you don't mind, you might show this memo to Andy Marshall, who also sent me a very long tape which I appreciated, but which I have not answered for the same reasons that I didn't answer yours.

I'll be seeing you all, then, about the end of July or early August, by which time I should pretty well have recovered from my hepatitis. (I'm still spending half the day in bed, and I have had to forego alcohol, that is wine, in Paris, which is something of an agony, though I broke down and jeopardized my health with a half bottle Dourd'argent the other night.) Please remember me to Thres and Mary Marshall, and to my friends in the Economics Department.

Sincerely,

Daniel Ellsberg

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